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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001858

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, AF SE NATSIOS, NSC  
FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON, ADDIS ABABA PLEASE PASS TO USAU

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TAGS: [KP](#)[KO](#) [PG](#)[OV](#) [PH](#)[UM](#) [PR](#)[EL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [IG](#)[AD](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: SUDAN - SECRETARY TO CONVENE A MINISTERIAL ON THE  
CPA IN ADDIS

REF: A. STATE 159362

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1852

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The American invitation to the National Congress Party (NCP) to participate in a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) Ministerial on December 5 in Ethiopia with Secretary Rice and regional countries has caused

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consternation for NCP officials who are unsure exactly how to react to an initiative they instinctively fear but don't know how best to respond to or blunt. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge Fernandez notified Sudanese officials on November 26 of the invitation to the NCP and SPLM by Secretary of State Rice to attend an Addis Ababa ministerial

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on CPA implementation in Ethiopia. While CG Juba delivered the message in Juba and CDA notified key SPLM insider Luka Biong Deng in Khartoum (reftel b), the same message was delivered to National Congress Party officials in the Sudanese capital. SPLM leaders received the invitation positively and promised a formal answer of who will attend by November 28. The Northern Sudanese are still not quite sure how to respond to an initiative they fear "would put them on public trial."

[1](#)3. (C) CDA first spoke to Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Othman Ismail about the message. Ismail said that while he personally welcomed the initiative as a sincere American effort to be helpful and balanced, others in the Sudanese regime would not be so charitable. He noted that the MFA, currently controlled by hardliner Ali Karti, would almost certainly recommend against attending since this initiative does two things the NCP wants to avoid: it "internationalizes" the ongoing crisis between the SPLM and NCP, and serves as an informal IGAD summit in all but name. CDA encouraged Ismail to keep an open mind about the ministerial. He responded that a better way for the Secretary to exert her influence would be to come to Khartoum

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and Juba, "we would never turn down such a visit" and "it would look less like a show trial". But he also asked if there was any time in Addis for a pull-aside bilat between the NCP and the Secretary.

[1](#)4. (C) Ismail suggested that the US try to get the message to often sidelined moderate Vice President Ali Osman Taha even though he believed that neither President Al-Bashir, nor Taha, would attend such an event. CDA called Taha's office

where a clearly flustered office director Dirderi said "we'll let you know if we have any feedback." Once seen as "America's man" within the NCP, Taha, the architect, with John Garang, of the CPA, has been marginalized for quite a while in the party and has kept a low profile but last month met with SE Natsios - his first formal contact with an American official in a very long time. Surprisingly Ambassador Dirderi called back to set up an appointment for Charge with Taha sometime during the December 3-5 timeframe.

15. (C) The same surprise was to be seen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Upon reception of the demarche, Protocol Director Ali Yusuf excused himself to brief acting Foreign Minister Karti. Ambassador Yusuf then returned and noted that Karti would give a formal response "either today or tomorrow" (November 26 or 27) but cautioned CDA to review what the GOS have been saying recently, criticizing efforts to internationalize the CPA at this time "in favor of the SPLM". CDA noted that the CPA is already "international" and that the US was a witness to it that had actively helped bring it about, especially with the compromise on Abyei which was an American effort. In a perhaps related move, a representative for Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Al-Samani al-Wasila contacted Charge on November 27 suggesting a return trip to Washington with the promise of an Al-Bashir letter to President Bush.

16. (C) Comment: Not surprisingly, the Ministerial proposal has pleased the SPLM and worries the NCP. For them, the question is what is the best way to respond to the Americans, outright rejection or counter-proposal? While the NCP has been quite open in seeking to blunt recent possible CPA initiatives by the UN, IGAD and the IGAD Partners Forum, the American dimension of this initiative is something else. The NCP both fears American power but also longs for American attention and approval. Our sense is that the NCP will not seek to be openly confrontational but try to come up with counter-offers - meetings in Sudan, visits to Washington, letters - to avoid an open forum where it could be isolated and attacked. The aim is the same, to prevent giving its counterparts in the SPLM a stronger hand to play in the

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ongoing tortuous political confrontation between the two partners to the CPA. End comment.  
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